

CHAPTER 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Multiple Choice:

Which of the following is the study of social inequality NOT concerned with? (p. 10) c

- a. individuals and groups
- b. personal positions
- c. psychological positioning**
- d. structural arrangements

Which of the following is NOT an event that has led to greater social inequality? (pp. 2-3) c

- a. companies have been able to pass of their pension obligations to the federal government
- b. blue collar-workers have been especially hard-hit because manufacturing jobs have either moved or been shut down
- c. the streamlining and downsizing of businesses have increased job opportunities for experienced, specialized workers**
- d. the downsizing of companies has impacted white-collar workers

Which of the following is a true statement supporting the argument that inequality is not inevitable? (pp. 4-5) b

- a. hard work determines the level of economic inequality faced by an individual
- b. discrimination is a factor that contributes to inequality**
- c. inequality is a by-product of differences in individual talents, characteristics, and motivations
- d. private property opens up opportunities for economic equality

Which of the following statements would be made by functionalists regarding inequality? (pp. 4-5) a.

- a. inequality is a necessary function of society**
- b. inequality endangers society
- c. inequality is unnecessary but not a bad thing
- d. inequality hinders individuals from filling the most difficult societal positions

Which of the following is NOT a type of equality cited by Bryan Turner (1986)? (p. 5) b

- a. equality of opportunity
- b. equality of the individual**
- c. equality of outcome
- d. equality of income

The ideal conditions of pure capitalism assumes: (p. 7) b

- a. equality of result
- b. equality of opportunity**
- c. equality of condition
- d. equality of income

Capitalism: (pp. 7-8)

- a. is generally viewed by liberals as irrelevant for democracy
- * **b. is generally viewed by conservatives as a promoter of democracy**
- c. stresses the value of "equality of result" rather than "equality of opportunity"
- d. is universally viewed as an economic system separate from the political system of democracy

Conservatives argue that: (p. 8)

- a. inequality can be eliminated
- b. inequality is incompatible with a free society
- c. inequality in material rewards is harmful to society
- * **d. distinct social classes are largely nonexistent in the U.S.**

Liberals tend to argue that: (p. 8)

- a. the U.S. is a classless society
- * b. unbridled capitalism is destructive of human beings
- c. the effects of inequality on individuals are primarily positive
- d. inequality is largely a natural phenomenon, rather than an artificial creation

Conservatives are more likely than liberals to argue that: (p. 8)

- a. people are basically the same in their talents and abilities
- b. inequality is the result of the structure of the political economy in society
- * c. **inequality is rooted in biological and inherited differences between individuals**
- d. characteristics of the labor market and work organizations are the primary reason for economic differences between individuals

The belief in the classlessness of U.S. society is encouraged by: (p. 8)

- * a. **lack of agreement about the definition of social class**
- b. the increasing trend toward less privacy and personal security in the U.S.
- c. the presence of many reliable and clear-cut physical clues to class position
- d. the belief that economic differences exist between categories of people not just individuals

Recent data clearly indicate that for the U.S.: (pp. 2-9)

- a. poverty has been virtually eliminated
- b. economic differences between social classes have sharply diminished
- c. globalization has improved the economic well-being of virtually all Americans
- * d. **none of the above**

There is universal agreement that: (pp. 2-9)

- a. social classes exist in the U.S.
- b. inequality is inevitable and natural
- c. capitalism is an enemy of democracy
- * d. **none of the above**

The cultural aspect of the argument that socioeconomic differences between groups are decreasing stresses: (pp. 2-11)

- a. the massive growth in the poor population in the U.S.
- * b. **the tendency for individuals in different classes to adopt the same values**
- c. the decline in the importance of race and sex as determinants of economic position
- d. governmental policies aid the poor as well as restrain the growth in the wealth of the rich

Survey research indicates that Americans believe that "hard work" is the most important factor determining one's movement within the U.S. class structure. This belief is most consistent with which position? (p. 4)

- a. Inequality has sharply increased in recent years.
- * b. **Equality of opportunity is preferable to equality of outcome.**
- c. Inequality is due to the obstacles that those in higher classes place in front of those in lower classes.
- d. Inequality produces significant damaging social consequences for many people from certain social categories in our society.

The less social interaction you have with people from social classes different than yours, the greater the likelihood that: (p. 6)

- * a. **social class is "invisible" for you**
- b. you are aware of significant class differences between people.
- c. you will believe that inequality produces detrimental consequences for society
- d. you will believe that poverty is a result of the system rather than the poor themselves

Which of the following is NOT a consequence of globalization? (p. 8-9)

- a. freedom and open borders advantage wealthy countries while disadvantaging poor ones
- b. transnational corporations and other international organizations can bypass regulations of national governments, weakening their power
- c. international relationships have become more complicated
- d. **the inflow of immigrant workers decreases the significance of status differences and inequality**